



CAPACITY ASSESSMENT OF THE MEDIA IN GHANA

Baseline Study



BY
MEDIA FOUNDATION FOR WEST AFRICA
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with funding support from:



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Executive Summary

This study assesses the capacity and sustainability prospects of key and influential media organisations in Ghana focusing on the media environment, emerging ownership patterns, strengths and weaknesses, and challenges with management, staffing and financing. From radio, TV, online and newspaper platforms, ten media organisations in Ghana, predominantly radio, were sampled based on the Geopoll survey. Eight industry stakeholders and academics were added to the media sampled for this study. Based on in-depth and key informant interviews, the findings of the study are presented under three main areas.

Context of the Media Environment in Ghana

- The liberalisation in the media space resulted in proliferation in the media industry but, ironically, professional standards kept falling.
- Though a generally free media landscape, there are creeping incidents of threats on the lives of journalists; sometimes, from security agencies like the Police and National Security personnel.
- Journalists are at most risk reporting on political issues especially during active party and national political periods.

Ownership Patterns

- The media environment is inundated with ownership by political party officials and affiliates and lately religious organisations.
- Participant-agent approach to management is the most common form of management style within the media industry.

Strength and Weakness of the Media Industry

Strengths

- Radio has created a platform for citizens to share their thoughts on critical developmental issues.
- The radio industry enjoys a lot of goodwill from the general public.
- Compared to TV and newspapers, the radio industry enjoys a lot of flexibility in terms of listener access and language use.

Weaknesses

- The absence of well documented reporting guidelines largely affects quality of reportage by journalists.
- Documentaries and features which represent somewhat objective way of dealing with topical issues in-depth remain expensive and time consuming. Moreover, just

a few staff of many of the radio stations are equipped with the skill of doing a documentary and this remains a challenge.

General Background

Media organisations in most free market press environment are key actors in the economic and political spaces of their respective societies. Majority of these organisations are often preoccupied with monitoring costs, managing individual motivations and instilling implicit organisational control mechanisms which may significantly impact media content and account for the variability that exist in content across different media organisations (Napoli, 1997).

The media industry in Ghana experienced sporadic growth and ushered in a free market media system in a unique way after the liberalisation of independent broadcasting. Consequently, the media system which emerged is inherently expected to depend on advertising revenues to stay afloat in “business”. By this arrangement, the media is insulated from state and religious influences (Serworno & Agorde, 2018). Although Ghana continues to be among nations with the freest and unfretted press freedom on the African continent, there is also weightier burden to ensure the maintenance of the status quo and to infuse game-changing strategies that would build capacities and establish sustainability prospects.

A 2015 media sustainability study by the International Research & Exchanges Board (IREX) has asserted that for journalism to function efficiently in democracies and serve their useful role, media organisations and journalists must commit to promoting professional media standards to serve as a strong foundation in nurturing and expanding the frontiers of freedom of speech and content diversity.

Perceived falling standards in news reportage, prevailing and emerging ownership patterns in the media industry and some institutional challenges that confront media organisations have often occasioned a call by stakeholders in the industry for a comprehensive approach in addressing overt and covert bottlenecks that threaten media sustainability in Ghana. This baseline study assesses the context of the media environment and the institutional challenges that have the potential to threaten or are threatening media sustainability in the Ghanaian broadcast industry. It evaluated the pattern of media ownership and its overarching influence on media management. This study also made recommendations for addressing the challenges identified from the perspective of the media organisations and industry stakeholders.

Methodology

This study is primarily qualitative in nature and this allows meaning making of the media environment in Ghana from an interpretive and natural approach (Lincoln & Guba, 20002). Using two different data collection methods, the study relied on in-depth interviews with top management of the selected radio stations and stakeholders from the media industry. The second part dealing with the perception of the public about the participating radio stations was treated as a reception study where an *online focus group discussion* was developed and administered in consultation with Geopoll. Geopoll's¹ digital platform across Ghana was used for the focus group discussion. A member of our research team worked closely with Geopoll to determine the limits of this "online focus group discussion". The scope and focus of the study was radio but other forms of media (TV, Online and Newspaper) were added to account for any peculiarities beyond radio that might enrich the findings. Ten leading and influential media outlets were selected across the country based on the 2019 Geopoll rankings. Availability and willingness to be part of the study were the underlying ethical considerations fundamental to the data collection process. Three radio stations (Peace FM, Angel FM and Zaa FM) that were ranked highly on the Geopoll survey were not included in the study because of their non-availability within the duration of the study.

Table 1. Media organisations included in the Study

Medium	Outlet	Designation of Interviewee
Radio	Joy FM	Chief Operating Officer and News Editor
	Citi FM	General Manager
	Adom FM	News Editor
	Kessben FM	General Manager
	Skyy Power FM	Director
	Radio Progress	General Manager
	ATL FM	General Manager
TV	Joy News	News Editor and Chief Operations Officer
Online	Myjoyonline	News editor
Newspaper	Daily Graphic	General Manager (Newspapers)

¹ Geopoll is an international audience research company with activities comprehensively covering Ghana.

Eight expert interviews were also conducted with industry stakeholders: National Media Commission (NMC), Ghana Independent Broadcasters Association (GIBA), Ghana Journalists Association (GJA), a senior lecturer at the Department of Communication Studies, University of Ghana, a lecturer at the Ghana Institute of Journalism and the Chief Communication Analyst at the Centre for Media Analysis.

Table 2. Experts/Informants Interviewed

Interviewee	Organisation	Designation
Yaw Boadu Ayeboafuo	National Media Commission	Chairman
Affail Monney	Ghana Journalists Association	President
Gloria Hiazie	Ghana Independent Broadcasters Association (GIBA)	Executive Secretary
Dr Gilbert Tietaah	University of Ghana, Department of Communication Studies	Senior lecturer
Dr Etse Sikanku	Ghana Institute of Journalism	Lecturer
Dr Messan Mawugbe	Centre for Media Analysis	Chief Communication Analyst
Kodjo O. Botchway	GeoPoll	Business Development & Country Lead
Paula Sanziri	National Media Commission	Administrative Officer

In-depth interviews of averagely one hour with participants were conducted face-to-face and few of them via the telephone. The interviews were transcribed. After a close reading of the interview transcripts, a list of concepts that were revealed by the data were noted. During the second reading of the transcripts, the initial concept ideas were modified into codes and added to the pre-determined codes. Using key-words-in-context and constant comparison strategies of analysis, the entire data was coded with appropriate *comments* and *memos* for the reasoning behind each code. After the initial coding process, the researchers printed out the *code systems* from the MAXDQA software for manual consistency check. Based on the code system, *comments* and *memos*, the second level coding started with the purpose of seeking patterns and connecting codes into a conceptual hierarchy. The emerging themes were discussed in the light of the study's objectives.

All participants were asked to give consent freely to participate in the interviews and told of the nature of the study. They were all informed that they could skip questions that they were not comfortable with during the conversation and indicate information that they do not require to be cited for.

The ethical principles and guidelines underpinning this research project are designed to protect the safety of interviewees and their businesses, as well as staff of the regulatory institutions and the University lecturers. The lead researcher and the team reflected on the ethical principles of respect, confidentiality, consent, safety, 'Do No Harm' and referrals before commissioning the interviews.

Findings

The findings of this baseline study assess the general context of the media environment in Ghana, ownership patterns pertaining to the media industry, strengths and weaknesses inherent in the management of the selected media outlets. The public's general perception about the selected media houses was separately assessed.

Context of the Media Environment

The study assessed four key areas within the media environment in Ghana: the professional standards of media practice in the country, the management of radio industry, the security of journalists and the conditions of services of media practitioners. The findings of the study report a general decline in the professional standards in the media environment in Ghana.

Communication experts, media regulators and media managers interviewed on the subject of the state of the media environment acknowledged that there is a steady decline in professional standards in the media industry. The decline, in their view, is manifested in the preponderance of poor reportage in the industry and failure by journalists to adhere to basic journalistic ethical standards. The President of GJA notes that the media is generally a powerful medium for effecting change in society. However, most media organisations and journalists often derail from their track in adhering to acceptable standards and regulations in their quest to break the news.

Generally, the media space and environment in Ghana is free. Today, we have a lot of media outlets and organisation in the industry following the liberalisation of the industry. Though the liberalisation was good in improving the numbers, it did not reflect in quality of reportage.

This observation is corroborated by the Chief Communication Analyst at the Centre for Media Analysis who explained that the falling standard is both institutional and individual specific.

Media institutions and journalists are often found wanting in getting the basics right and this translates into the quality of reportage.

This creeping phenomenon, as discovered by the study, is influenced by a profit motive. With the aim to satisfy its audiences and subsequently attract advertisers, media owners and managers would often employ a '*crowd puller*' who has the flair in oratory yet with no professional training in the field of journalism to host programmes and present prime time shows. This trend, though tends to affect quality of content, has become a common business model to attract advertisers for the purposes of raising revenue to meet the organisation's financial obligations as well as become competitive in the media market. A closely related consequence to this phenomenon is the sidestepping of accepted ethical standards in content generation on various media platforms in the broadcast industry. From the initial stage of newsgathering through to scripting and final production, adherence to accepted journalistic practices as enshrined in GJA's code of conduct is often not followed, thus raising concerns about professional standards. A lecturer at the Ghana Institute of Journalism sums up the phenomenon through this suggestion:

At the heart of most of the ethical challenges we often complain about in the media can be attributed to inadequate orientation and training on what is allowed on air and what cannot make the cut for public consumption.

The study also shows that beyond the challenges of falling standards in the media industry, programming has been described as highly monolithic in form. However, media managers from the selected media outlets think otherwise, asserting that programming formats are just an aspect of the entire programming structure. Language, style of presentation and programme content vary from one media house to another. The Chief Operations Officer of the Multi-media Group underscores the point that;

Generally, programming is structured along daily lifestyle patterns. Listeners to a station would ordinarily want to be abreast with trending issues and stories in the day and would easily opt for morning newspaper review discussions on air. Late morning to afternoon is extremely busy working hours and the audience tend to listen to shows with relatively less talk while late afternoons are periods people catch up with programmes that tend to relax them after a hard day's work. These variations largely speak to the diverse nature of programming content in the industry.

Besides this disagreement between industry experts and media managers on the nature of programming, this study also observed that many of the radio stations operating in the broadcast industry in Ghana could be categorised as small-scale enterprises (SMEs). Like many of the SMEs in Ghana, the industry does not attract the best of managers with necessary strategic skill required for such a competitive environment.

The managers in the radio industry are mostly owners who have no academic or professional knowledge of management. These owners are often driven by interests different from growing a successful media business. This study established that they usually employ old journalists, a member of family or friends. The situation is a little different for Group companies because they employ managers that have proven records and rather introduce them to the unique differences that exist with managing media, a service that can neither be standardised nor controlled like steel products.

The managers of the selected radio stations agreed that proper management of the radio industry could result in an effective leadership which can probably resolve emerging issues like falling professional standards and security of journalists (work safety and conditions of service). However, they argued that managing a radio station in Ghana is just too challenging a job because of the crowding of the industry with too many authorisations without paying any cognisance to the size of the advertising market available to finance the media industry.

The competition is extremely chaotic and innovators suffer being copied on daily basis while staff have freedom to refuse correction and training by hopping from one station to the other. But the Director of Sky Power FM made a suggestion on how to get the management of the industry going by comparing the Owner/manager-staff model with the Owner-Manager-staff model popularly known as the Principal-Agent approach:

People acquire the licence and leave it for the middle men to run based on that agency theory. But we own it and run it ourselves and so there is consistency that has kept it going. But I am sure if we were not around things would

have been different. As soon as you change management things get changed. We have kept our stations running with this idea and others around us are doing well because they have learnt to keep certain key staff with skills over a long time.

The findings of this study further show that safety of journalists in the country is generally not under major threat. However, recent incidents of physical attacks on journalists and a murder case, in one instance, are incidents that put a blot on the successes the country has achieved in the past in guaranteeing the safety of media practitioners.

Media managers and owners expressed worry over the threats on the lives of journalists especially when reporting on political issues or political party activities during active political seasons. What even worries participants most is when the attacks come from security agencies like the Police. There is again, a general agreement amongst communication experts and regulators interviewed that safety of journalists in the country is on a gradual decline and smacks of double jeopardy. They argued that the safety of journalists is as important as their conditions of service and in the case where their conditions of service are not good enough, journalists count on their safety as given. Now, it is becoming obvious that journalists can neither count on their safety nor better conditions of service. The regulatory institutions and journalism associations support this argument and postulate further that the conditions of service among media practitioners are so poor that often journalists are forced to sacrifice professional standards just to make a living. They argue that any further constraints to the practice of journalism under these conditions could result in severe consequences for the future.

Public perception of selected media houses

The public perception of the selected radio stations was conducted separately as a reception analysis. The results show that the audiences value the selected radio station and they described them more often as agents of development. *Daily Graphic* newspaper, the only non-electronic media organisation, was rather perceived from professional perspective.

Table 3. Public Perception of Selected Media Houses

Joy FM	<p>Joy FM is known and respected for its development Journalism approach. Programmes such as ‘Hotline’ and its ‘Thought Leadership’ series have over the years advocated and mobilized for change:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ‘Next to die’ led to the building of the mother and baby unit block at KATH <p>Joy is authoritative on news and current affairs i.e. Newsfile and Super Morning Show, which are rallying platforms for duty bearers, civil society and leaders of industry/ business</p>
Citi FM	Citi’s morning show, CBS with its learned Bernard Avle, is regarded by many as a show that focuses and validates Government’s policy. Citi FM is also well known for championing ‘made in Ghana’ from music/entertainment industry to the built environment and tourism.
Adom FM	Adom (FM & TV) is the most preferred brand for news and current affairs by the masses nationwide. Programmes such as ‘Fa B3 Wo So’ with Captain Smart is noted for its anti-corruption crusade.
Kessben FM	Kessben is largely perceived as a development agent within the Ashanti region. It is seen as objective and credible media institution. It was among the 13 radio stations honored by MFWA for its significant contribution towards issues-based and peaceful 2016 elections.
Skyy Power FM	Skyy Power has been consistent at leading advocacy for the development of Western region. It is largely perceived as a trusted media brand and enjoy incredible goodwill as it is seen as an integral part of the story of the oil rich region.
Radio Progress	Radio Progress is ‘a development-oriented community radio station which seeks the active participation of community members in the equitable and sustainable development of the Upper West region.’
ATL FM	ATL’s affiliation with Joy FM coupled with its unique programming has earned it a reputation for authentic news and source of information for the educated masses in Cape Coast and its surrounding towns.
Joy News	Joy News has been successful in positioning as the preferred news channel. Delivering exclusives- exposés, documentaries and interviews. It is largely perceived as professional and credible.
Myjoyonline	Myjoyonline is a major reference point for news and information. It also compliments the advocacy and development Journalism by its sister radio brands as well as streaming content from Joy, Adom, Luv, Asempra, Nhyira and Hitz.
Daily Graphic	Daily Graphic is the most widely read newspaper in Ghana. It is perceived as highly credible and it derives its reputation from the level of professionalism it integrates in its reportage. It covers diversity of issues from politics, to sports and gender related issues.

Media Ownership Pattern

Ownership of media organisations is dominated by private individuals and organisations. However, this form of ownership, as observed by the Chief Communication Analyst at the Centre for Media Analysis, is characterised and inundated with masculinity and conglomeration. Ownership by officials and affiliates of political parties and religious organisations is now the common form of ownership.

A study by Reporters without Borders in 2016 explored the media ownership forms in Ghana and indicated a high level of conglomeration in the media industry with most of the owners and managers being males. The study asserted that the male-dominated ownership of the media in Ghana feeds into the glass ceiling theory where women beyond a certain limit disappear in the hierarchy of management.

This baseline study, in analysing the effect of these forms of ownership in the industry, noted that oftentimes, overt influences of the owner on editorial content is limited except in few cases. However, the study established that there are rather, subtle influences by most media owners/financiers on the *agents* they have hired and from whom they demand for quality of output. This phenomenon is well situated within the principal-agent approach of management where owners or financiers of an organization through hired managers of the organization act in a manner that reflect the objectives and the ultimate goal of the owner. Napoli (1997) underscores this point and asserts that:

“Whatever the motivation, constant and systematic direct involvement by ownership in content production is likely to be an impractical method of assuring that objectives are met. Therefore, ownership is faced with the classic principal–agent dilemma of how to ensure that management adheres to its wishes. One of the strategies is to hire like-minded individuals. Indeed, this appears to often take place within the media ownership –media management relationship” (pp.211).

This approach to management is common in the Ghanaian media landscape and in the case of ownership by a political party officials or affiliates, it tends to satisfy the political ideology of the owner although he/she would not come spelling out what ought to be done but his/her wishes and goals are met indirectly.

In instances where the owner's motive for setting up the organisation is driven by profit considerations, managers, acting as agents of the owner are ‘whipped’ into line to carry out their duties in a manner consistent with stated business objectives. The general manager of Kessben FM, one of the leading radio stations in the country stresses that:

“Though the owner does not directly influence editorial content, he expresses concerns and proffers ideas on how to get things done well in a manner consistent with established business model of the Kessben Media Group.

Strengths of the Media Industry

The study also sought the views of interviewees on the strengths of the media in Ghana. The study established that the increase in authorisation within the radio industry created multiplicity of platforms for

citizens at all levels of the social strata to contribute to issues of national interest. The Station Manager of Radio Progress in the Upper West Region particularly explained that,

Within this region [Upper West], our platform has been very instrumental in bringing challenging issues raised by the citizens to the door step of local authorities. Most of these concerns get addressed in the medium to short term period. This for me is a major strength where our radio has been able to create a common platform for interaction between citizens and local authorities which otherwise would have been difficult.

The findings of the study also reveal the significant impact radio has created in breaking the language barrier. Today, radio stations broadcast in both foreign and local languages and one needs not be literate before accessing and participating in the information sharing process. Consequently, citizens have warmly embraced this opportunity offered by the radio platforms and in many instances contributed to content generation. The Chairman of the NMC particularly observes that beyond the mutual partnership between the media and its audiences;

Radio has also become a first point of call by citizens in getting their issues and concerns known by governments and other institutions of state. The citizens believe that radio will get their issues heard quicker and responded to on time.

The goodwill the radio stations in the country enjoy is equally less expensive to maintain compared to other forms of media. Radio is also very flexible to run. The Director of Skyy Power FM compared her experiences with managing both radio and TV for a decade:

I think the people listen to radio a lot as opposed to the newspaper and to others. Even compared to TV, people listen to radio in their cars, at work, in their homes, people listen to radio ahead of the other media. And the budget is quite cheap relatively to the running cost of others. In radio, you can use English language, or you can mix it up, you can change, radio is a bit more flexible.

Weaknesses of the Media Industry

Regulators, media experts and media managers are in agreement that the single biggest challenge confronting the media industry is lack of skilled labour force. Indeed, the Executive Secretary of GIBA while acknowledging this challenge posits that there is a direct link between the quality of human resource and the quality of output. She notes;

We need capacity building. Not only for the practitioners themselves, that is, the journalists, the programmes show hosts and staff but if we could have some kind of stakeholder engagements, where maybe owners, managements are able to recognise, realise, accept the importance of, and take part in capacity building workshops. Because, if we give capacity building to the journalists and programme show hosts, they are lower down version. Then we are not really doing much. Then the top still remains the way it is. Because how many journalists or producers are able to influence management decision? And so, it has to be, at this point, I think it has to be a top-down approach.

Beyond capacity challenges mentioned in this study, other challenges such as lack of a well-documented reporting guidelines for journalists, weak management systems and lack of professionalism are other major

factors that largely undermine media development and potentially affect media' sustainability prospects in Ghana. Apart from the overarching strengths and weaknesses of the media in Ghana, individual radio stations mentioned the specific challenges they have with management, financing and staffing. Table 4 indicates the detailed synergies.

Challenges of Individual Media Houses

The challenges in the media as identified by the study are primarily in a form of financial constraints and lack of capacity on the part of journalists to undertake challenging tasks and break into new ground of reporting. The table below presents challenges specific to each radio stations² selected for the study.

Table 4. Challenges of Individual Radio Stations

Media House (Coded)	Challenges		
	Management	Financing	Staffing
RS 1	<p>Change in management is always problematic for continuity and consistency.</p> <p>Competitiveness of the radio industry and the market renders management a very daunting task with little or no guarantees of sustainability because management style and programming innovations are always copied by others.</p> <p>Radio presenters possess egos that have to be nursed and managed differently especially because of the impatience currently exhibited by the new generation of presenters.</p>	<p>Increase in the number of radio stations has resulted in the watering down of rate cards as other radio station offer advert almost for free. Income has drastically reduced.</p> <p>Pharmaceutical firms and herbal medicine contributed to the advertising budget significantly but some now own their have radio stations</p> <p>Running cost keeps increasing at the expense of dwindling budget from advertisers. Meaning that investment in programming which is already insignificant will have to be further decreased.</p>	<p>Quality of journalists and presenters has gone down although there few exceptional cases.</p> <p>Poaching Presenters remains a big worry for smaller radio stations and stations that operate in smaller markets because those in the bigger market can pay more, they have the power to poach.</p> <p>Ease of movement of presenters from one radio station to the other due to proliferation of stations means investments in training needs are easily lost.</p>

² *Myjoyonline, Joy News and Daily Graphic* were not included in the challenges to individual radio station table because the study envisages capacity building opportunities at the moment for only radio stations.

RS 2	<p>Competitiveness of the radio industry and the market renders management a very daunting task with little or no guarantees of sustainability because management style and programming innovations are always copied by others.</p> <p>Maintaining experienced staff to prosecute the vision of the organisation has been challenging as majority of the labour force move to competitor organisations in the same industry who offer better conditions of service.</p> <p>As an NGO, the organisation is restricted by law to engage in any profit making venture. This poses a big challenge for the organisation to develop 'business' strategies to generate enough income to meet its financial obligations</p>	<p>The limited financial resources available to run the day-to-day operations of the organization threaten their sustainability.</p> <p>The high cost of maintenance is a drain on the organization limited resources and often there are limited funds to support core media work and motivate journalists.</p> <p>The media organisation operate in a market where there are fewer organisations willing to place adverts and pay competitive rates. Most adverts are done at no cost as part of the organisation's mandate to promote access to information to its community</p> <p>The limitation by law to broadcast within a certain radius adversely affect the prospects of attracting advertisements from institutions outside their domain of operation.</p>	<p>Due to financial constraints, the organization is unable to recruit highly skilled and professional labour.</p> <p>The organization always risks losing trained staff to other competitors in the media industry who offer better conditions of service.</p> <p>Most of the journalists in the organisation work on voluntary basis and the risk of losing experienced professionals to other markets is very high.</p>
RS 3	<p>The high cost of running the organisation with often little or no profit made as a business entity often constrains the prospect of expanding its capacity to hire more highly skilled labour force.</p> <p>The proliferation of radio stations in the industry makes it very difficult to have loyal listeners over a very long period of time. This affects the prospects of referrals from your audience to the radio station. The management is always tasked with the daunting responsibility of developing new</p>	<p>The organization has often explored strategic means to finance its operations. Though advertising remains the major source of income, sustained financial support for targeted content has turned the fortunes of the organization to be a game changer in the media industry.</p> <p>The demand for better conditions of service is always a drain on available yet limited funds.</p>	<p>The organization has a highly skilled labour but the high cost of running a media organization coupled with limited financial resources often poses a challenge recruiting more hands to work on unexplored areas in the media space.</p> <p>The organisation often stand the risk of losing experience staff to other markets that offer better conditions of service.</p>

	<p>strategies to maintain a substantial audience share in the market.</p> <p>The tagging by politicians of the radio station as belonging to one party or the other sometimes put a dent on their brand as a media organisation doing its professional work.</p>	<p>The high cost of licensing fees often threatens the sustainability of the organisation that already has the challenge of raising income to support its day-to-day operational costs.</p>	
RS4	<p>Management is often faced with the challenge of frequently revising its business models in order to make meaningful returns on investments to stay afloat in the industry.</p> <p>Belonging to a group of companies with profit as the driving stimulus, there is always a subtle burden on management to remain competitively profitable. While competing to remain relevant in the media industry, it is also faced with the challenge of being a profitable venture within a group of businesses whose work is mainly profit driven</p>	<p>Increase in the number of radio stations has resulted in the watering down of rate cards as other radio station offer advert almost for free. Income has drastically reduced.</p> <p>Advertising revenue is the major source of income for the organisation. The rather shrinking advertising market limits the organisation's capacity to invest into more resource demanding beats.</p>	<p>The organisation faces the challenge of losing its experienced staff to other competitors with juicy financial packages.</p> <p>Though with high skilled labour force, there lack of periodic training to build capacity often poses a challenge on media practitioners to undertake challenging tasks.</p>
RS5	<p>The tagging of the radio station as belonging to one party or the other by politicians sometimes put a dent on their brand as a media organisation doing their professional work.</p> <p>Occasional legal suits by 'offended' parties often puts a drain on the finances of the organisation with the need to pay high legal fees to defend a course they deem justifiably reported.</p> <p>The proliferation of the airwaves coupled with perceived falling standards have always attracted criticism from stakeholders and sometimes threat on the lives of the journalist. Management spends lots of resources having to ensure the security of the journalists.</p>	<p>Advertisement remain the major source of income for the organisation. However, so many of the organisation default in payment forcing the organisation to write off debts and effectively reducing income levels.</p> <p>The proliferation of media organisation in the industry limits the availability of funds to support the running of the organisation.</p>	<p>The organisation has a highly skilled labour force but with a very high standard of professionalism the organisation desires to maintain, there is always the challenge of organizing regular training for selected staff to prosecute the vision of the organisation. The limited resources, however, makes it difficult for the organisation to expand its net wide to include all staff in rather expensive training activities.</p> <p>The organisation though a competitive brand, it always stands the risk of losing its experienced labour force to other competitive markets</p>

			that offer better conditions of service.
RS6	<p>The tagging by politicians of the radio station as belonging to one party or the other sometimes put a dent on their brand as a media organisation doing its professional work.</p> <p>Occasional legal suits by ‘offended’ parties often puts a drain on the finances of the organisation with the need to pay high legal fees to defend a course they deem justifiably reported.</p> <p>The proliferation of the airwaves coupled with perceived falling standards have always attracted criticism from stakeholders and sometimes threat on the lives of the journalist. Management spends lots of resources having to ensure the security of the journalist.</p>	<p>Advertisement remain the major source of income for the organisation. However, so many of the organisation default in payment forcing the organisation to write off debts and effectively reducing income levels.</p> <p>The proliferation of media organisation in the industry limits the availability of funds to support the running of the organisation.</p>	<p>The organisation has a highly skilled labour force but with a very high standard of professionalism the organisation desires to maintain, there is always the challenge of organizing regular training for selected staff to prosecute the vision of the organisation. The limited resources, however, makes it difficult for the organisation to expand its net wide to include all staff in a rather expensive training activity.</p> <p>The organisation though a competitive brand, it always stands the risk of losing its experienced labour force to other competitive markets that offer better conditions of service.</p>
RS7	<p>Proliferation of radio stations in Ghana has reduced community radio stations to nothing and bullied.</p> <p>As service in the University, we do not seem to be a major focus of the university’s developmental agenda. We have worked harder than every other one to be recognized.</p>	<p>We are not profit seeking but we have a lot of needs that money must serve but the regulators do not care and continue to put several impediments in our search for resources.</p> <p>Balancing the regulatory ban on advert for community radio with the quality and efforts at getting sponsorship has always remained a challenge.</p>	<p>Poaching of presenters by commercial station after training them has become an annual burden.</p> <p>Students’ stay on campus is limited and keeping them after school is tough for a small community radio</p>

Summary findings

- The liberalisation of the airwaves resulted in the proliferation of radio authorisation. The phenomenon was a game changer in improving the number of radio stations who were on-air but not same transformation has been experienced in terms of quality of reportage and general media practice;
- The 1992 constitution guarantees the freedom of the press but recent incidents of reported murder and physical attacks on journalists is a threat to the safety of journalists in the country;
- Journalists face the most threats in their careers while reporting on political issues;
- The working conditions of journalists in the country are generally poor with some journalists not paid at all and would have to depend on monies (transportation), given to them when they go on assignments;
- The emerging ownership pattern are in four folds: consolidated ownership, ownership by masculinity, ownership by officials and affiliates of political parties and ownership by religious organisations and pharmaceutical firms;
- The principal-agent approach to management where the owner, through hired managers, enforces his/her objectives- projecting their political ideology and ensuring quality of output in a bid to maximize profit;
- The non-existence of a broadcasting law has created a big gap in addressing the issues relating not only to ownership of the media in the country but also regulating the radio industry has been ineffective.
- The major weakness of the Ghanaian media (radio industry) is the overcrowding of the airwaves with authorisation that the market can no longer support. This has not only led to the general decrease in professional standards, it has also affected how much resources are available for the running of the radio stations. The rippling effects are obvious in the fears expressed by many managers that if the number of authorisation goes beyond the current 505, the conditions of journalists will get worst and investments in programming will decline significantly
- The absence of reporting guidelines for many radio stations is largely affecting the quality of reportage and resulting in breaches of journalistic ethical standards; and
- Training of journalists and placement of special skilled journalists from independent institutions with the selected radio stations was one of the major ways the managers felt they could be assisted to help deal with the falling standards of professional broadcasting.

Conclusion

The media industry in Ghana keep growing in numbers but is confronted with a lot of human and organisational capacity challenges. While financiers and owners of the media outlets are often driven by political or business motives for setting up the media organisation, media managers, sometimes with no media background, carry out their managerial duties to accentuate the owner's stated priorities.

The media industry in Ghana has adopted a business model that seeks to ensure their sustainability in a rather small yet competitive market space. This phenomenon of operating in such business-like architecture, often creates a challenge of ensuring balance between employing the most skilled and trained labour force against strategies that will ensure the organisation makes enough revenue to support its day-to-day operations.

The general phenomenon of safety of journalists is always a big challenge for media owners and managers. Journalists and editors often find themselves at the crossroads when in one breathe, content production involves a lot of political issues and in the same vein, journalists are attacked most when covering political activities in a bid to get content for production. The frequent attacks put their lives under threat. Ironically, the media environment in Ghana is rated as the freest in Africa and one of the shining examples in the world.

Recommendations

Against the backdrop of the weakness and challenges in the media industry, the following recommendations are made for improvement:

- Communication experts, media regulators and media organisations must partner to develop a thorough reporting guidelines for all genres of journalism;
- Sustained capacity building trainings/seminars/workshops tied to stated deliverables should be instituted to boost the skills and specialty of journalist.
- A periodic media management training must be instituted and championed by media regulators for all media owners and managers in the country in a strategic effort to get them to be active partners in promoting professional standards;
- There must be a sustained advocacy for the passing of the broadcasting bill into law to forestall the phenomenon of consolidation in the industry which when not curtailed may stifle diversity of views;

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